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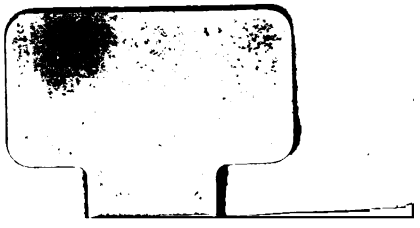

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CEMETERY BURIAL;

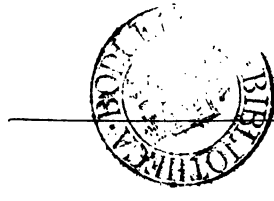
OR

SEPULTURE,

ANCIENT AND MODERN.

BY GEORGE MILNER,

A DIRECTOR OF THE HULL GENERAL CEMETERY COMPANY.



LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET.
TAMWORTH: J. THOMPSON.
1847.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BARONET,

M.P. &c.,

This Work

IS, BY PERMISSION, MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

HIS OBLIGED AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Hull, June, 1847.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The apology which the author offers for the publication of the present work, is *an earnest desire* that the subject might be brought before the public, and the attention of the philanthropic and benevolent called to our present mode of interment in crowded and up-heaped burial places, which cannot fail to have a most injurious effect, both upon the health and the morals of the people.

The early usages of the Church were opposed to interment within God's Holy Temple—only the relics of Apostles and Martyrs could be deposited within the walls of Sacred Buildings, and such a profanation as indiscriminate interment was never even thought of. "The Emperor Constantine, to whom the Church was so much indebted, asked no higher favour than to be buried under the portico of the Church of the Holy Apostle."

These concessions, like all others, have gradually led from less to more; until our Consecrated Buildings have now become a receptacle for the bodies of all, no matter whether "brought down in their journey" by vice and crime; no matter whether scoffers at our Holy Religion, or humble followers of Christ; each and every one may now have their bones deposited beneath the sacred roof—no provision is made to prevent it, no exception, generally speaking, can be taken.

It is much to be regretted that our Consecrated and Sacred Buildings, set apart for the pure worship of God, should be thus profaned by the general admission of the dead. We cannot too highly reprobate the custom of bringing within the Holy precincts the remains of the notoriously vicious and abandoned.

The adoption of rural cemeteries is indeed, on many accounts, highly called for. A modern writer on the subject thus enquires:—"Why should we deposit the remains of our friends in loathsome vaults, beneath the gloomy cells and crypts of our Churches, where the human foot is never heard, save when the sickly taper lights some new guest to his appointed apartment? Why should we measure out a narrow portion of earth for our grave-yards, in the midst of our Cities, and heap the dead upon each other, with a cold calculating parsimony, disturbing their ashes, and wounding the sensibilities of the living?"

There is, surely, less reason for this now than when the people were taught to "pray for the dead, that their sins may be forgiven!" Some reformation in our system is wanting; and we would recommend the adoption of secluded burial-places, free from the gaze of the idler, and the busy tread of the worldling, where the mourner in heart may pay a secret visit to the grave, and pour forth that anguish of soul which must ever be felt on the removal of one near and dear to us. The heart, thus softened down by sorrow and bereavement, may not inaptly be compared to the fruitful soil in the parable of the husbandman, ready to receive the good seed; a "small still voice," often at such periods, whispers within the breast, "the departed shall no more return—prepare thou to follow." Many a prodigal son might be reclaimed by visiting the grave of a departed and neglected parent; provided such resting-place were suitably situated, away from the busy haunts of man, and so arranged as to invite, and not forbid, meditation.

These are the grounds on which we would recommend the adoption of Cemeteries, at a convenient distance from all large Towns. There can be little question but an incalculable benefit would be the result, both as it regards the health and morals of the people; and it would have been well, had each populous parish, some years ago, adopted this system, and provided a suitable burial-ground, at a moderate distance from the Town.

Hull, January, 1846.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The public mind has been much engaged in the discussion of sanitary measures, since the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet. The tables of mortality and other statistical returns, clearly shew a fearfully rapid decrease, in the average period of life, in populous localities and Towns; over rural districts; this is less attributable to their varied modes of life, than to the impure state of the atmosphere—infested with noxious effluviæ, arising from imperfect drainage, the decomposition of the dead, and other evils, which can only be effectually remedied by a judicial interference on the part of the government.

Never was there a fitter opportunity to grapple with this subject—the great political questions, which for years appeared to sever the empire, agitate the senate, and engage our rulers in fiery contest, are now settled— party has become shaken and shattered if not annihilated, and a providential opportunity seems now to present itself, for good and thinking men, to turn their attention to philanthropic objects; and by judicious sanitary measures, to alleviate the sufferings—improve the condition—and prolong the lives, of their fellow men.

The practice of burial in large Towns is productive of much evil. "It would not be difficult to show, that some of the most afflictive visitations of Providence have originated in the contamination of the atmosphere, from putrefying animal substances, and that to the neighbourhood of the grave-yard, may be attributed the violence, if not the origin, of some of the most destructive diseases which have depopulated the human race.[1]"

1 Gatherings from Grave-yards.

Sufficient evidence has been advanced by Mr. Walker and others who have written on the subject; nor does any one seem to doubt the necessity of increased accommodation for the decent interment of the dead, the rapid growth of our population, say from 200,000 to 300,000 annually, speaks trumpet tongued through the length and breadth of the land, of the inadequacy of our parochial grounds, which have been used generation after generation.

Government, it is confidently expected, will shortly devise and carry out measures, to close for a period, if not for ever, these long disturbed grave yards, and thus protect the sanctity of the Tomb: the health of the living requires it—decency demands it—and feelings of reverential respect implore it.

The morals of a people may be safely questioned, where the remains of their fellow-men cease to be revered, and the ashes of their ancestors are no longer considered, objects of pious regard. We have not, as a nation, it is to be hoped, thus far degenerated; there are but few men we trust, that cannot find an echo in their breasts, to the anathema of Shakspeare "Cursed be he that moves my bones."[1] The poor as well as the rich, equally desire, that their bones should remain undisturbed, and their ashes be respected: there is a virtuous and honorable emotion with most men, to leave a good name behind them, and to live in the affectionate remembrances of their fellow men.

We surround, says a modern writer, "the burial of our dead, with all the pomp of outward show, and all the solemnity of religious observances; nowhere else does the eloquence of the Liturgy shine forth with such impressive simplicity—all is calculated to stamp upon the memory of the survivors, the religious importance of the ceremonial in which they bear their important part. The earth itself is consecrated by the Church; and the spot becomes hallowed by the imagination of the people."—Nowhere is the heart more feelingly moved, than by the Tomb of a dear parent, or the grave of a beloved and affectionate child.

How revolting to our feelings then must be the startling fact, that in numerous instances, the quiet of the grave is

1 Shakspeare's tomb-stone in the chancel of the great church, Stratford-on-Avon.

broken in upon, and the remains of our friends dug up, and exposed to every dishonour, "flung up in the face of day to make room for others."

Let us see how facts will bear out this assertion. The grave yards of the metropolis have been fully described, and their vile practices exposed, by Mr. Walker, in his several valuable writings. The old church yards are not large enough to hold their annually increasing tribute, and thus they are continually disturbed, and recently buried corpses removed to make room for others: enough is already known of London, let us therefore turn to the provinces.

In Hull, the Town in which the author resides, there is a population of about 70,000; the published returns of the Registrar General however, only include the parishes of Holy Trinity, and St. Mary's; and therefore, in dealing with facts, we must confine ourselves to these districts, which, according to the last census, contained a population of 41,130.

So early as the year 1301, Archbishop Corbridge mentions a Cemetery in Kyngestone. This burying ground is described in the will of John Schayl, in 1303, as the Cemetery of Holy Trinity of Kingston-upon-Hull; in 1320, King Edward granted a vacant piece of ground at the west end of the Church, for the enlargement of this Church yard —the plot altogether, including the site of the Church, only contains about 5,040 square yards, and has ever since been used as a place of interment for this Parish. It is crowded every where with bones and coffins, some of the latter within a foot of the surface; the ground as may readily be imagined, is one mass of decomposed flesh and blood: it is raised two or three feet above the level of the adjoining streets by interments, notwithstanding those streets are now higher considerably than they formerly were.

Holy Trinity is situated in the Market-place, and entirely surrounded by dwellings—at the west, a row of houses overlooks the ground, and in summer months, offensive smells are complained of.

In 1783, a new ground was opened for this parish, containing about 14,520 square yards,—the ground has long since been filled, and no interment can now take place without

disturbing human remains: this ground has also been considerably raised by interments above the adjoining streets.

In the other Parish, we find St. Mary's Church was founded or enlarged in 1333, as Archbishop Melton then granted licence for "performing divine offices in the Chapel, and the rites of sepulture in the ground." The present Church yard contains about 750 square yards; it is frightfully crowded, and the ground raised four or five feet above the street level—graves cannot be made without mangling and displacing remains.

A new ground was obtained for this Parish in 1774, it contains about 2772 square yards; this is now very much crowded, so much so, that it is necessary to prick with an iron rod for a new grave.

The Parishes of Holy Trinity and St. Mary's, according to the last census, contained 41,130, as before stated; the published Tables of Mortality shew that from the year 1838 to 1846 inclusive, there have been no less than 10,601 deaths recorded in these two parishes. How then is it possible, that under existing arrangements, violation of the grave can be avoided; no interment can possibly take place without desecration—the quiet of the grave exists but in the imagination.

Many other Cities and Towns in the empire could furnish similar evidence;—and the statesman who will turn his attention to the subject, and support salutary reforms, will win the affections of the people, and earn more lasting laurels than by the most brilliant defeat of a political opponent.

Hull, May, 1847.

CEMETERY BURIAL OR SEPULTURE.

Ancient.

Our knowledge, at the present day, respecting the manners and customs of the first ages of the world, is so limited and indefinite as not to encourage even a speculation as to their modes of interment. Even after the flood, the narrator contents himself with informing us that Noah, after having lived 950 years, died.*

During those remote periods, as also the Patriarchal ages, from the simplicity of manners and primitive habits of the people, we are, I think, fully justified in concluding that simple inhumation, or ordinary burial, somewhat similar to that practised in our own day, would be adopted by them.

In the days of Abraham, Sepulchres, or Vaults, capable of containing whole families or tribes, were in common use, as we may learn from the following account given in the 23rd chapter of Genesis:—"And Sarah died in the land of Canaan, and Abraham spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying-place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." The reader will observe particularly the closing words, "out of my sight." To some they may appear a superfluous expression, the act of burial seems to imply this, without having it expressed;—but not so in those days: the Egyptian, and other surrounding nations, it is true, buried their dead, but not out of their sight, as we shall have occasion to shew in the sequel: and the sons of Heth answered, and said unto Abraham, "in the choice

* Genesis, c. 9. v. 29.

of our sepulchres bury thy dead;" and Abraham answered, "If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zorah, for the cave of Machpelah, which is at the end of his field; and Abraham gave to Ephron 400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant, and after this buried Sarah his wife; and the field and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth." In this cave Abraham was himself afterwards interred, as were also many of his descendants.

Another instance we have in the burial of our blessed Saviour. It stands thus recorded:—"And after this, Joseph of Arimathea besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And then came also Nicodemus, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in the linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new Sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid; there laid they Jesus." *.

If we consult Rabbinical writers, it does not appear, at any time, to have been customary for the Jewish nation to embowel or embalm their dead, as did the Egyptians; yet in the present instance, spices and perfumes are said to have been abundantly made use of. The Jewish method appears to have been to wrap up the spices with the clothes in which the body was enfolded; and the larger the quantity of spices used at the interment, the greater was considered the respect paid to the deceased, and honor done to his memory. The great mass of the dead were deposited in natural caves, or Sepulchres hewn in the living rock, and were there laid without coffins; hence, in all probability, the use of aromatics was intended to overpower, so far as possible, the disagreeable effluvia arising from advanced corruption; without this counteracting influence, it would have been next to impossible to have entered the sepulchral cave.

* St. John, c. 19, v. 38—41.

According to the statements of Oriental writers, vast numbers of natural and artificial caves are still to be found in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Persia, where human bodies are deposited, and may yet be seen.*

The Assyrian was the first great Empire after the flood: this people carried their arms into India, a country even in those days celebrated for its fruitfulness and riches, and were successful under their Queen Semiramis. The manners and customs of the Assyrians would probably be adopted by the people of India; but the period is now so remote, and the little information we have on the subject so varied, that more of speculation than certainty must be deduced from it: be this as it may, the inhabitants of India appear, from the earliest times, to have consigned their dead to the funeral pile, which was generally erected at a short distance from the town or village, and at a convenient distance from a lake or river; the corpse being placed upon the pile, and the officiating Brahmin having offered up a prayer, the fire was then applied by the nearest relative, and the ashes afterwards gathered by the Brahmin, and thrown into the sea, or some neighbouring river: requests were sometimes made, that their ashes might be put into an urn, and carried to the Ganges, or some other sacred stream—this, being a more expensive process, could in most cases be adopted only by the wealthy; the funeral urns were sometimes deposited in the earth. Modern writers inform us, "that existing sepulchral sites are to be found on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, (the rivers of Assyria and Babylon,) consisting of urns of various forms, lined with bitumen, and sometimes glazed, containing bones and dust; in some places, where the stream has cut the bank perpendicularly, its steep face presents multitudes of urns, from the summit to the water's edge, in every variety of form and size, arranged sometimes regularly, and sometimes not." †

The ancient Egyptians were notorious for their numerous idolatries, and various religious superstitions:—

* Pictorial Bible, vol. 3, pages 241, 178, &c.

† Pictorial Bible, vol. 3, p. 178.

"Who has not heard, when Egypt's realms are named,
What Monster Gods her frantic sons have framed?
Her Ibis, gorged with well-grown serpents,—there
The crocodile commands religious fear."

It is not our intention to enter into a detailed account of the Egyptian mythology, or to allude to it further than our subject may require. This ancient people, if not the inventors of the art of embalming, certainly cultivated it to the fullest extent, and with them it reached its highest perfection: this may, perhaps, be less attributable to their extensive acquirements in the arts and sciences, than to their religious superstition, and the doctrines they held of the transmigration of souls; they believed that, after a certain number of years, a singular revolution would happen, and that those whose bodies could be preserved until that time, would have them restored, and live in them again,—but that if the body were once destroyed, there was no possibility of getting another. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians were the first that laid down the principle of the immortality of the human soul; and that, when the body is dissolved, the soul enters into some other animal, which is born at the same time; and that, after going the round of all the animals that inhabit the land, the waters, and the air, it again enters the body of a man who is then born. This circuit, they say, is performed by the soul in 3000 years."* This belief in the doctrine of transmigration of souls would stimulate them to the most active enquiry, as to the best manner of performing the operation of embalming, aud extraordinary pains would naturally be taken to preserve the body from putrefaction, in the hope that the soul would one day be again permitted to join the body it had previously quitted: this process, it appears, was undergone by all classes of society. The bodies were afterwards placed in cases, and conveyed to the Sepulchres, or Catacombs, where they were deposited—not out of sight, but in rows along the side of the cavern. It is calculated that many of them have now been preserved upwards of three thousand years,—an astonishing proof of the perfection of this people in the art of embalming. Several of these bodies have, in later years, been brought into England, and

* Herod. Hist. Laurent's Translation.

are exhibited in our museums as Egyptian mummies. One writer, who visited these Catacombs, says, "What astonishes me is, that the hump-backed, the lame, the blind, and every other maimed kind of folk, had as strong an inclination as the rest, to inhabit a second time, so incommodious and disagreeable a lodging." *

In the works of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, may be found detailed accounts of the process of embalming dead bodies. In the tombs of Egypt are often found various articles bearing reference either to the habits or professions of the deceased. In Pettigrew's "History of Egyptian Mummies,"—a work well worth the perusal of persons curious in these matters—is a detailed account of various articles that have been found;—he says, "to perpetuate the memory of the deceased, we find in the tombs the emblems of the profession or trade of the defunct. Thus we have pick-axes, and various instruments for agriculture and mechanical purposes, the net of the fisherman, the razor and stone to sharpen it, of a barber; cupping glasses, vases of perfumery, pottery, and wooden vessels of all kinds; baskets of fruit, seeds, &c: loaves of bread near to the mummy of a baker; paints and brushes alongside of an artist; various instruments of surgery by the body of a physician; a bow and arrows by the side of a hunter; a lance by the soldier; a hatchet and poignard by another; and the style and receptacle for ink by the clerk.

The distaff has been found in the cases of male mummies, which would appear to confirm the statement of Herodotus, that the men were employed in the manufacture of cloth, whilst the females were engaged in commerce; combs, paints, mirrors, and other articles of the toilet, have been found with the mummies of females." The process of embalming was not confined to the people alone; for we have handed down to us mummies of birds, fishes, and beasts, which are said to have been regarded as objects of worship. An old writer thus ridicules their devotional homage to cats:—

> "You cry and wail whene'er you spy a cat
> Starving or sick. I count it not a sin
> To hang it up, and flay it for its skin."

* Middleton's Geography, vol. 1, p. 428.

The Patriarch Jacob manifested much anxiety in declining life, respecting the disposal of his body; and calling his son Joseph to his bedside, made him swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, saying, "I will lie with my Fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place: and Joseph said, I will do as thou hast said. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his son, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost." * Then Joseph commanded his servants and physicians to embalm his father,—a process which, notwithstanding their perfection in the art, appears to have occupied forty days: we read in the 50th chapter of Genesis, 3rd verse, "and forty days were fulfilled for him, (that is Jacob) for so are fulfilled the days of those who are embalmed;" and Joseph carried his father, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah. We cannot for a moment entertain an idea that the religious superstitions of the people amongst whom he was residing, would, in any way, influence the mind of Joseph, respecting the embalming of his father; but being a person of importance in Pharaoh's household, perhaps the dignity of his station might in some measure seem to require this distinction.

On the death of Joseph, we find it recorded that he was also embalmed, and put in a coffin in Egypt; † but afterwards, when the children of Israel had taken possession of the promised land, Joshua informs us, they fetched the bones of Joseph "up out of Egypt, and buried them in Shechem." ‖ that is in the field of Machpelah.

On the death of King Saul, the Philistines fastened his body in derision to the walls of Bethshan; "and when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the walls of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there; and they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days." §

Notwithstanding the above, the act of cremation or burning the dead was never a custom in general use amongst

* Genesis, c. 47, v. 33. † Genesis, c. 50, v. 26.
‖ Joshua, c. 24, v. 32. § 1 Samuel, c. 31, v. 10 to 13.

the Jewish people. Nevertheless, they paid great respect to the remains of their dead; every city had its public cemetery, which was required by law to be not less than 2000 cubits distant from the walls of a Levitical city; foreigners and criminals were not allowed to be buried within its precincts: the "Potter's field to bury strangers in," you will remember, was purchased with the price of Judas' treachery.

Josephus records that the Jewish King Aristobulus, whom Pompey's partisans destroyed by poison, lay buried in honey, till Antony sent him to the royal Cemetery at Judæa. Simple burial was, however, the ordinary method, —an instance of which is forcibly given in the account we have of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, whose body had been deposited in a vault or cave, with a stone laid upon the mouth of it. "Jesus said take ye away the stone: Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto him, Lord by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." * A more convincing proof than this, methinks, cannot be adduced in proof that simple inhumation was the ordinary sepulture of the Hebrew nation. I have, however, met with three passages of Scripture, which, after this assertion, will require some little explanation. First, in the book of Chronicles we read, "And Asa slept with his fathers, &c.; and they buried him in his own Sepulchre, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecary's art, and they made a very great *burning* for him." † And again, in the account given of the death of the wicked Jehoram, it is said, "his people made no *burning* for him, like the burning of his fathers." §

And lastly, in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, in speaking of King Zedekiah, we read, "thou shalt die in peace; and with the burnings of thy fathers." These descriptions are not very definite, and might seem to have reference to the funeral pile, were we not acquainted with the manners and customs of several foreign nations, where, I presume, this description of burning, viz., incense or odours at funerals, is practised at the present day, and can be traced as a cus-

* St. John, c. 11, v. 39. † 2 Chronicles, c. 16, v. 13, 14.
§ Ibid, c. 21, v. 19.

tom of the highest antiquity. As an instance of this, the Persians, we are told by Herodotus, * and other writers, did not consign their dead bodies to the flames, but held fire in the utmost veneration, and worshipped it as one of their deities, considering it nothing short of profanation "to feed a divinity with human carcases," † and buried their dead in coffins, filled with perfumes, salt, and lime: the relatives carried provisions to the graves for several days after the burial, and are said "seriously to have expostulate with the defunct on his unkindness in leaving them." ‖ In several provinces they have an annual custom of burning incense on the graves of their departed friends.

The Chinese, after embalming their dead, and depositing the body in a coffin, remove it into an apartment decorated with white tapestry, the colour they assume in mourning, where it is placed on an elevation in the form of an altar, and there suffered to remain for months, in extreme cases, for years; during which period burnings are made from time to time, of incense and aromatics, in honour of the deceased. §

In the empire of Japan, the custom of cremation is conducted on the most refined principles: the funeral pile is built of sweet scented wood; and spices, with other odoriferous perfumes, are thrown into the flames to heighten its fragrancy. [1] When the body is deposited, the relatives and friends throw presents into the fire, for the benefit of the defunct, in the next world. (Similar practices are recorded of the later Druids, both in Gaul and Britain, such as "casting letters on the funeral pile, to be read in the next life, and "lending money, to be repaid in another world," &c. [2]) On the following day, the bones and ashes are collected in a rich funeral urn, and then deposited in the Sepulchres of their ancestors, which places are generally situated a short distance beyond the walls of a town.

The Romans had two methods of sepulture, viz.,—simple inhumation, and cremation; the latter was in more general use, at least among persons of distinction. Historians

* Herodotus, Lib. 3—16.
† Sir Richard Colt Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire, p. 23.
‖ Middleton's Geography, vol. 1, p. 68. § Ibid, vol. 1, p. 15
1 Middleton's Geography, vol. 1, p. 194.
2 Illustrations of British History, vol. 1, p. 10.

inform us, that Numa Pompilius, their second king, "having reigned 43 years, in profound peace, died, leaving orders for his body to be buried in a stone coffin, contrary to the custom of the times." * Cæsar informs us, that the Romans derived the custom of burning their dead, from the Gauls, † which, according to Pliny, was adopted to protect the remains from indignity; and, as an example, instances Sylla, the dictator, who left instructions for his body being burnt, in order that the friends of Caius Marcus, whose bones he had disturbed, might not be able to retaliate on him in like manner. ‖ This custom afterwards became almost universal. Pompey the Great, fled before the victorious Cæsar, and sought shelter and protection in Egypt, which was, however, withholden from him, as he there met with a most treacherous death. It is recorded, that after having cut off his head, they left his body naked on the strand, and exposed to the view of all whom curiosity might lead that way. § Philip, his faithful freedman, however, still kept near it, and when the crowd had dispersed, he washed it in the sea, and looking round for materials to burn it, he perceived the wreck of a fishing-boat, of which he composed a pile. Whilst he was thus employed, he was accosted by an old Roman soldier, who had served under Pompey in his youth: "Who art thou," said he, "that art making these humble preparations for Pompey's funeral?" Philip having answered that he was one of his freedmen; alas! replied the soldier, "permit me to have a share in this honour also: among the miseries of my exile, it will be my last sad comfort, that I have been able to assist at the funeral of my old commander, and touch the body of the bravest general that ever Rome produced." His ashes were afterwards deposited beneath a little hillock or barrow; and in later days a splendid monument was erected to his memory.

The Romans paid the greatest attention to funeral rites, because they believed that the souls of the unburied were not admitted into the abodes of the dead, or at least wandered a hundred years along the river Styx, before they were allowed to cross it; for this reason—if the bodies of

* Goldsmith's Hist. Rome, vol. 1, p. 19. † Cæsar de Bello Gall, Lib. 6.
‖ Sir R. C. Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire, p. 23.
§ Goldsmith's Hist, Rome, vol. 1, p. 384.

their friends could not be found, they erected to them an empty tomb. * Under the Emperors, the custom of burning became almost universal; but was afterwards gradually discontinued upon the introduction of Christianity, so that it had fallen into disuse about the end of the 4th century.† Instances are on record of the Romans placing the bodies of their dead in honey, to preserve them from corruption; —it is said that the body of Alexander the Great was rubbed with and embalmed by honey. ‖

Before we proceed to speak of our own island, mention may be made of one or two singular methods of burial, practised in other countries. The people of Otaheitee deposit their dead upon a morai, or species of temporary shed, where the flesh is suffered to putrify; the body, after remaining about five months, is taken down, the bones are then scraped, washed, and buried. § The Parsees expose the remains of their dead, to birds of prey.[1] Some of the ancient Eastern nations are said to have placed the body in a vase of aquafortis, and thus the muscular parts became dissolved.[2] The natives of Guiana, in South America, bury their dead without clothing, and after the body has remained a sufficient time under ground, for the flesh to have become decomposed, the bones are taken up again, and distributed amongst the nearest relatives.[3] In the states of Morocco and Fez, in Barbary, the greatest veneration is paid to the dead, and the following rules are said to be most scrupulously observed, viz.—first to place victuals and drink upon the tomb at certain periods, in order that the dead may not want; secondly, to bury gold, silver, jewels, &c., with the corpse, that he may not be in bad circumstances in the other world; and thirdly, to dig the grave very wide, that the defunct may not be incommoded for want of room. They have another custom, which is equally singular and absurd, viz.—never to bury two persons in the same grave, lest they might have some difficulty in finding their own bones on the day of resurrection.[4]

* Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 408. † Ibid, p. 411.
‖ Pettigrew's History of Egyptian Mummies, p. 86.
§ Middleton's Geography, vol. 2, p. 511.
1 Pictorial Bible, vol 3. 2 Ibid, vol 3, p. 178.
3 Middleton's Geography, vol. 2, p. 466. 4 Ibid, vol, 1, p. 278.

In the Canary Islands are found species of mummies, commonly called Guanches. In Teneriffe, the principal island, many specimens have been discovered, showing that a similar practice of embalming to that of the Egyptians, must at one period have been adopted by them.

In the highlands of Peru, animal substances become completely dried up, by mere exposure to the air. Human bodies are there found wrapped up in skins of the Vicugna, or Peruvian Camel, bound closely around by ligatures. * Many other singular customs, with reference to burial, might be enumerated, were we to traverse the face of the globe; but the reader will doubtless consider enough has been said on this head.

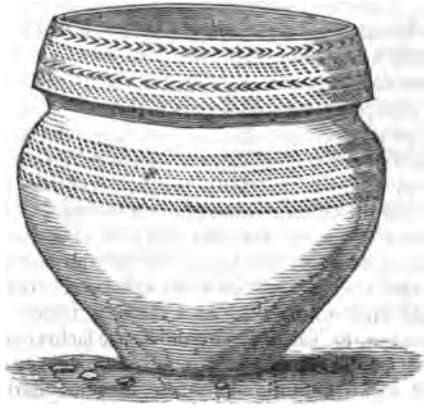
From what has been previously advanced, it would appear that the most ancient method of interment was simple inhumation, or depositing of the body in an entire state, beneath the surface of the ground; and this was doubtless the prevailing custom amongst the aborigines of ancient Britain: an example of which we are supposed to have in a tumulus opened at Gristhorp, near Scarbro', in 1834, which presented a rude coffin, scooped out of the trunk of an oak, in which was discovered a human skeleton, with part of the skin of some wild animal; a spear-head much oxydized, some flint weapons, and a wooden skewer or pin, near the breast, supposed to have been used to secure the skin in which the body had been enveloped. These relics of by-gone days, are now deposited in the Scarbro' Museum; and a descriptive pamphlet was published at the time by Mr. Williamson, the curator. Here, it is believed, we have an instance of an ancient British interment: the absence of all pottery, seems to indicate a priority over urn-burial, and the presence of the skin seems to correspond with the dress or garments worn by the aborigines of this soil. Cæsar says, "the greater part within the country go clad in skins." Their mantles were fastened upon the breast with a thorn, or pointed piece of wood. This fashion might also refer to the Saxons, as Tacitus informs us, the poorer sort "wore pelts made of beast skins," † which were fastened with a clasp, or for want of this, were secured with a thorn;

* Pettigrew's History of Egyptian Mummies, p. 239.
† Speed's Britain, p. 289.

having otherwise no garments at all. The presence, however, of the flint weapons, will prove the sepulture to have been prior to the time of the Saxons.

Simple inhumation, as we have before said, was doubtless the most ancient mode of interment; notwithstanding this, at a very early period, most of the Northern nations practised cremation; and the ancient Britons, we learn from historians, were accustomed "to burn their dead:" * indeed, without the assistance of written evidence on the subject, the fact is fully made known to us, by the presence of numerous tumuli, on our Yorkshire wold hills, many of which have been opened, and present proof sufficient to satisfy the most sceptical on the subject, that they are of undoubted British origin.

In 1835, a tumulus was opened near Scarbro', which presented both modes of interment; above was found an inverted urn or vase, containing ashes and calcined human bones, together with a stone hammer, and flint spear-head—a drawing of the urn, now in the Scarbro' museum, you have below. Beneath this deposit was discovered a cist-vaen, or rude stone coffin, about 3 feet 8 inches in length, in which was found the remains of a human skeleton, with the



* Illustrations of British History, vol. 2, p. 253.

knees drawn up to the breast, and reclining on the right side, appearing to have been a primary deposit. Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in his "History of ancient Wiltshire," proves these modes of interment being cotemporary, and gives several instances where inhumation and cremation have undoubtedly been practised in the same age. Dr. Travis, of Scarbro', has published some interesting remarks, respecting the opening of the tumulus or barrow, above alluded to.

Ancient coffins are generally found much shorter than the skeleton deposited in them would seem to require; the one alluded to above was only 3 feet 8 inches in length, and within that space had been thrust a man above middle stature, and consequently presenting a figure with the knees drawn upwards: some have endeavoured to trace this posture back to the patriarchal ages, as we read in Genesis, "that Jacob gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost." For my own part, I can see here no analogy whatever, for Jacob was afterwards embalmed "according to the manner of the Egyptians," and would not be interred in this posture, but in an extended position.

Small urns, or cups, similar to the annexed engraving, are frequently found near the larger ones, and at the head or feet of skeletons, in those primitive sepulchres, as was the case in both instances above alluded to; but as they never contain either bones or weapons, but simply a brown earthy or vegetable powder; they have been designated by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, "*drinking cups*," and are supposed to have been filled with fruits, or other vegetable substances, as refreshments: amongst savage tribes, the custom of depositing food with the dead, still prevails. Sometimes we find the Romans put into their funeral urns a small glass vial; this is supposed to have been filled with tears, and consequently called by the moderns, lachrymatory. *

The circumstance of weapons and provisions being found deposited with the dead, shows the extreme darkness and superstition of the age; but, nevertheless, at the same

* Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 419.

time, clearly testifies that they possessed some indistinct ideas of a future state of existence.

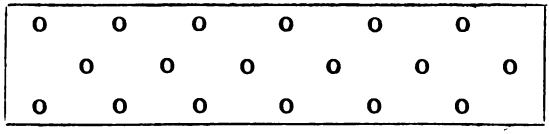
The custom of burning the dead is supposed to have been brought into England by the Gauls, as at the Roman invasion,—the rites of sepulture practised by the ancient Britons and Gauls very closely assimilate each other; and it is generally believed, that cremation was not employed in this island, prior to that period.

The sepulchral urns more immediately under our consideration, are those now deposited in the Museum of the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society, and were discovered at Newark, in Nottinghamshire, some few years ago: and it was at the request of the council of that society, that the author was induced to prepare the major part of the present Essay, which was read at one of the ordinary meetings of the society, during the session 1837-8. A vast number of urns were taken out of the ground at the same time, all very similar in appearance; the drawing below is taken from one in the possession of the author, containing, like the rest, dust and calcined bones.

Before we proceed further, it may, perhaps, be as well to state some few particulars connected with the locality of the spot where these ancient remains were found.

Newark is situated on an arm of the river Trent; the ancient fosse, or Roman road from Lincoln to Leicester, passed through it: indeed, this place may justly lay claim to the highest antiquity; the learned being of opinion, that the Roman Stations, Ad-Pontem and Crocolona, were situated in this vicinity, and that the town of Newark "rose like a Phœnix" from the ashes of those deserted stations. In Saxon times, it bore the name of Sidnacestor; but was so completely destroyed by the Danes, during one of their lawless incursions, that it was found necessary entirely to re-build the place, and hence it is supposed by some the present name of Newwerk or Newark is derived; in domesday survey, we find it entered Newerche.

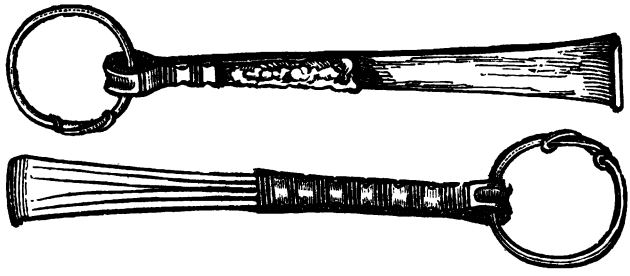
The sepulchral urns in question were found by the side of the present Nottingham road, formerly the old fosse way of the Romans. Some workmen were employed in excavating foundations for a house, in 1836, on the premises of Mr. R. Norton, situated at the extremity of the town, in the direction before stated. After they had got a little beneath the surface of the ground, their progress was arrested, by striking their implements against some earthen vessels, which they had hopes might have contained some hidden treasure; several of these were speedily reduced to fragments, against a neighbouring wall, when, to the no small disappointment of these ruthless beings, nothing presented itself, save the dishonours of the grave—dust, and mouldy bones. Urns to the amount of fifteen or sixteen were taken out in a tolerable state of preservation; but three or four times that number were broken and destroyed in digging; and many, I have no doubt, are still remaining in the ground. Mr. Norton very politely gave me every information in his power, and afterwards wrote me to this effect:—Newark, 24th October, 1837. Sir—Since you were here, I have sunk a saw-pit, about twenty-four feet long, four feet wide, and six feet deep: in digging out the earth and gravel, we found many urns; they appear to have been placed in regular order, so much so, that before we had finished the work, we could guess, within a few inches, where we should find them. The urns were found in about this situation—and would be about, I dare say, as many as I have shown, say eighteen or twenty. Some years ago,



in building houses in our neighbourhood, a little nearer the town, several urns were discovered."

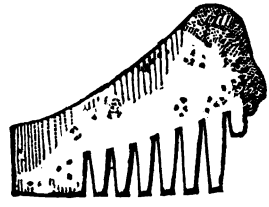
I was informed the whole of them were placed in an upright position in the ground, and within about two feet, or two feet six inches of the surface,—each contained calcined human bones; one alone, of which a drawing is given below, contained, in addition to the dust and bones, three

relics, now in the possession of the author, viz.,—a pair of tweezers of brass or bronze, of perfect workmanship, and most probably of Roman manufacture; as also the two other articles afterwards mentioned: the drawing of the tweezers is taken the natural size, and shows one of the arms missing—most probably broken off, for want of care, in



removal from the urn; a pair of shears or scissors of iron, much oxydized, likely to be of British manufacture, as Strabo mentions "sheeres," in enumerating articles of iron exported by the ancient Britons; * the representation below

is given the natural size; and a part of a comb, made of bone, also given the proper size. These tell us that the



urn contained the ashes of a female, as distinctly as the flint arrow-heads indicate the character of the huntsman; and the spear-head and battle-axe, that of the warrior.

"Combs in ivory and in wood,
Tweezers and scissors in bronze,"

* Speed's Britain, p. 169.

are enumerated amongst other articles that have been found with the female mummies in Egypt. †

Several of the urns were made of clay, worked by hand, and simply dried in the sun; these were ornamented by indentures of various fashions, made in the moist clay, or by figures drawn in a rude manner, with a pointed instrument; whilst others were of a more regular form, much harder in structure, from having apparently undergone the application of fire, (probably that of the funeral pile) and seemed in other respects more nearly to correspond with the coarser descriptions of Roman pottery.

From the above circumstances, we are inclined to the opinion that these sepulchral urns may be reckoned as belonging to the Romanized British period; the absence of flint, or stone weapons, proves, according to the rules laid down by Sir R. C. Hoare—and few have given more attention to these matters than that distinguished antiquary—that they belong to a later period than what is denominated the Celtic era. The situation in which they were found, viz., within a short distance of a Roman road, and at a convenient space beyond the boundary of one of their stations, together with the immense number of urns in the ground, without any appearance of tumulus or barrow, ‖ seems to favour the opinion that this spot may have been used as an ordinary Roman cemetery. The pottery appears to resemble British, rather than Roman manufacture—here we may probably have both; as it was not by any means unusual for the conquering Romans to establish stations on the site of towns deserted by the vanquished Britons; hence these very urns may one day prove the town of Newark to be of greater antiquity than is generally supposed, as some of them may belong to the Celtic, whilst others to the Romanized British period; the same barrows are often found to contain interments made at distinct periods of time. As an instance of this, Sir R. C. Hoare mentions "a stirrup of brass," supposed to be an invention of the fourth century, being found in a barrow, containing rude British pottery, and other articles, belonging to a very early period.

† Pettigrew's History of Egyptian Mummies, p. 112.

‖ The barrow might possibly have disappeared some time ago,—still interments are often found where no mound appears; hence barrows have been supposed to denote rank.

Several tumuli on our Yorkshire wold hills, have, on various occasions, been opened: some of these were found to contain skeletons entire, simply imbedded in the ground; others contained urns with calcined bones, and some of them merely fragments of bones, intermingled with charcoal: all are supposed to belong to the British period.

Cremation was practised by the Danes in England, during their several incursions; but after their settlement, burial in barrows became more common. † So late as the year 1016, cremation was made use of, after the battle of Assandum, in Essex, between the Saxon King Edmund, and the Danish King Canute. ‖

Barrows, or cairns, are not peculiar to our own island; but are met with, distributed over the continent of Europe, as also America.

Cairns are said to have been originally erected to mark the spot where some outlaw or criminal had been burnt: § hence, "I'd rather be under a cairn," means in Gaelic, I had rather be punished as an outlaw. The ceremony of cairn rising, although long continued, afterwards took a different meaning; and whenever a person was found dead, out of respect, a few stones were immediately placed over the spot where he was buried, to which each passenger usually paid his tribute;—hence the Highland saying, "I will add to thy cairn," means, I will keep the remembrance of thee alive; or when intended to convey ill-will, "not a stone will I throw upon thy grave!" The ghost of the departed was supposed to haunt his cairn; hence few highlanders would choose to pass one on his lonely moors, without adding to the heap, in order to keep on good terms with the spectre.

In the ninth century, the law of Charlemagne ordered all the bodies of Christians to be taken to the cemeteries, not to the barrows of the pagans. [1]

We cannot, however, contemplate the mound of the warrior chief, placed far from the tract of ruthless man, without having the mind carried back to former days: the chieftain, whose ashes are confined in the brittle urn, now

† Illustrations British History, vol. 2, p. 258.
‖ Sir R. C. Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire, p. 29.
§ Entymological Compendium, p. 294.
1 Sir R. C. Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire, p. 29.

sleeps in quiet—and the green grass grows and withers on his lonely barrow top, an emblem of human fate.

Much of our present method of sepulture had begun to be practised by the Anglo-Saxons, when their history was first written by the Christian clergy, and was never afterwards discontinued. †

Church-yards, (which were not originally enclosed,) are said to have been introduced into England about the year 742, by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, from what he had seen at Rome: ‖ it was a long time after this, however, before they became general. The monks of Glastonbury inform us, that a Christian church was erected in that place, so early as the year 63, which was surrounded by a church-yard, capable of containing one thousand graves; § but many have felt disposed to doubt the accuracy of this statement, which certainly appears extravagant, as more than seven hundred years afterwards, they were by no means general.

Cremation has long since ceased to be practised by civilized nations; and the sepulchral urn is known to us of the present day, but as a classical emblem, decorating the mural tablets in our religious edifices, or ornamenting other sepulchral mementos, erected to the illustrious dead.

† Illustrations British History, vol. 2, p. 258.
‖ Illustrations British History, vol. 1, p. 58. § Ibid, vol. 1, p. 34.

CEMETERY BURIAL OR SEPULTURE.

Modern.

We will next offer a few remarks on *modern* Sepulture. Our present practice of burial in crowded church-yards, and especially beneath Religious Edifices, is neither safe for the living, nor respectful to the dead: this subject, I am happy to say, is now engaging the attention of the public mind, and has not escaped the observations of our Legislature; and it is to be hoped, ere long, that through the persevering energy of Mr. Mackinnon, or some other philanthropist, measures may be adopted to remedy this crying evil; and to provide for the more decent interment of the dead, in large towns and populous districts. The report of the "Health of Towns Commissioners" clearly shows that the interference of Parliament, in this matter, has long been required.

Our leading journals in the metropolis, as well as the provinces, have in a very praiseworthy manner, taken up the subject. When an evil is proved to exist, a remedy should always be sought for. I am not one of those who advocate hasty measures, and undigested plans, or, for the sake of change, would uproot our time-hallowed institutions, and overturn established usages and customs, or merely to gain popularity, advocate "organic changes," which must eventually heap ruin, instead of benefit, upon the heads of those that are professedly said to be benefited; still, when we look around us, and find increasing populations require that, for the safety and comfort of the living, better provision

should be made for the burial of the dead,—it becomes the bounden duty of every good citizen to lend a helping hand towards devising and carrying out some plan, that may remove, or modify, the abuses complained of.

We will, in the first place, endeavour to show the evil tendeney of the present system of burial, as it regards health; and secondly, the effects it is likely to produce in vitiating the tastes, corrupting the morals of the people, and aggravating the feelings of the bereaved.

Burial is a subject rarely considered; and consequently, the evils that may arise from the process, if imperfectly performed, but seldom thought of. Habit has made us familiar with the present state of things, and, to all appearance, blunted the sensibilities of our nature; so that we scarcely bestow a thought upon the sickness and disease, frequently the result of inhaling the obnoxious and poisonous atmosphere generated during the decomposition of the the dead; and rarely try to obviate the evil, though most medical men could, on reflection, readily call to mind many examples of suffering, arising from, or attributable to, this cause.

In a work recently published by Mr. Walker, entitled "Gatherings from Grave-yards," many cases are given in detail, of suffering arising from this very cause; and several, where death has been the result. I would, therefore, recommend to such of my readers as are sceptical on the subject, a careful perusal of this work, as also the evidence taken before the House of Commons, rather than recite to them the painful and distressing accounts therein given, of sickness and death, occasioned by inhaling the obnoxious vapours generated by the decomposition of the dead. Typhus fever (and what is more fatal than its deadly ravages?) is generally admitted to derive its origin from the presence of poisonous gasses in the air, arising from animal substances in a state of putrescence; and if such be the case, how anxious should each one be to render every assistance in his power to remedy an evil likely to produce so fearful a calamity.

"The main object of a burial-ground," says Mr. Loudon, "is the disposal of the dead in such a manner as that their decomposition and return to the earth from which they

sprung, shall not prove injurious to the living—either by affecting their health, or shocking their feelings, opinions, and prejudices. In a burial-ground, properly arranged and managed, a coffin, after it is once interred, should never again be exposed to view, nor a human bone be disturbed."

Let us turn our attention to the decomposition of the dead, and its results. "The health of the living," says Dr. Charles Loudon, "is materially affected by a certain description of gas, † generated during the decomposition of the body. To inhale this gas undiluted with atmospheric air, is instant death; and even when much diluted, it is pro-productive of disease, which commonly ends in death." This deleterious gas abounds to a fearful extent in the soil of all crowded burial-grounds, which are invariably to be met with in ancient cities, and populous towns; and has also been proved to be more or less present in the soil thrown out of graves where bodies have been interred before.

"Animal poisons may be introduced into the human body in two ways—*directly* by inoculation, and *indirectly* by the lungs and skin. You all know how the morbid poison of small-pox gets into the blood by means of the respiration or by inoculation. So it is with the morbid poison of decaying bodies.

The fatal effects of the inoculation of putrid matter during dissection have proved by hundreds of examples. Many of the brightest ornaments of the medical profession have been cut off in this manner. The effects are sometimes almost instantaneous, and evidently arise from poisoning the blood. Thus, Sir Astley Cooper relates the case of a student who slightly pricked his finger while opening a dead body; no *local* disease could be traced, there was no appearance of of the puncture, yet the unfortunate young man perished within 48 hours, under symptoms closely resembling the dreadful excitement of hydrophobia.

A grave-digger, who had wounded his finger, being engaged in digging a grave in an overcharged church-yard in London, perished in a most miserable manner from abscesses over his body, in consequence of the animal compound becoming applied to his cut finger. The poison, thus, may

† Sulphuretted Hydrogen.

pass directly into the blood and excite dangerous disease, or produce death in its most dreadful aspect. This fact is uncontrovertible. §"

The distinguished chemist, Baron Liebig, asserts that the gasses given out during the decomposition of the dead are poisonous in their nature; and that these morbid poisons act on the system in a manner analagous to that of fermentation.

Sir Benjamin Brodie stated before the Parliamentary Committee "that the gas evolved from putrid bodies is chiefly sulphuretted hydrogen—a gas so noxious and so deadly, that the admixture of one part of it with 500 parts of atmospheric air, is almost immediately fatal."[1]

In the year 1782 and 1783, the minister of public health in France, thought it necessary, in order to check the further spreading of pestilential disorders then ravaging the capital, "to disinter upwards of six millions of human bodies. and have them conveyed away from human habitations."[2] We sincerely trust no such course of proceedings may ever be rendered necessary in England; it is to be hoped Parliament will take the matter in hand, for without their interference, I see not how so great an object is to be successfully accomplished, as the total abolition of interment in large towns and cities, except under very peculiar circumstances.

Whilst the disinterments from the burial-ground of "Les Innocents" in Paris, above alluded to, were carrying on, several eminent chemists were anxious to procure, for the purpose of analization, some of the gas generated during the decomposition of the human body. Fourcroy says, "in vain we endeavoured to induce the grave-diggers to procure us some of this elastic fluid; they uniformly refused."

The horrible odour and poisonous activity of this fluid, announces to us that it is mingled with hydrogenous and azotic gas, holding sulphur and phosphorus in solution. It may, and most probably does, contain also other deleterious vapours, the chemical nature of which has hitherto

§ Mr. G. A. Walker's Third Lecture on the Metropolitan Grave-yards.
1 Report on Effect of Interment of Bodies, p. 180.
2 The Living and the Dead, p. 80.

escaped philosophical research, while their terrible actions upon life are too strikingly evident. ‖

Of the poisonous effects of this exhalation, many examples might be given. We will, however, confine ourselves to one case, mentioned by Dr. Copeland, in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons,—"About two years ago, (he says,) I was called in the course of my profession, to see a gentleman, advanced in life, well known to many members in this house, and intimately known to the speaker. This gentleman, one Sunday, went into a dissenting chapel, where the principal part of the hearers, as they died, were buried in the vaults or ground underneath. I was called to him on the Tuesday evening, and I found him labouring under symptoms of malignant fever; on questioning him on the circumstances which could have given rise to this very malignant fever—for it was then so malignant that its fatal issue was evident—he said that he had gone on the Sunday before to the chapel, and on going up the steps he felt a rush of foul air issuing from the grated openings on each side of the steps;—the effect upon him was instantaneous; it produced a feeling of sinking with nausea, and so great debility, that he could scarcely get into chapel. He remained a short time, and finding this feeling increase, he went out—went home—was obliged to go to bed—and there he remained. When I saw him, he had, up to the time of my ascertaining the origin of his complaint, slept with his wife: he died eight days afterwards: his wife caught the disease, and died in eight days also, having experienced the same symptoms." §

Let us look at facts as they stand, in reference to this subject, in most towns. Are not the burial-grounds far too limited for the increased and increasing population? Is it not notorious that they are filled with the dead even to heaping up, and that the sanctity of the grave is continually violated by the ruthless hand of the grave-digger; and the want of more space, we are told, renders this course inevitable. Mr. Loudon, whose evidence we have before quoted, calculates, "that in the ordinary mode of burial,

‖ In the *Sun* newspaper, of 18th October, 1844, you may find some of the above remarks, with other observations on the same subject.

§ See *Hull Advertiser* newspaper, Dec. 19th, 1845.

the extent of an acre of ground will give 1361 graves; and that for the health of the community, it ought to be imperative that a layer of earth, of not less than six feet in depth, should be left between the upper and under coffins, so that the earth may absorb the greater portion of the generated gasses." For many years past it has been the complaint, that nearly all our places of interment are most indecently filled, that scarcely another interment could take place without the grave being desecrated: the bones of the older tenant are disturbed to make room for the mortal remains of another, which, it is lamentable to state, in the majority of cases, are again dug up by the sexton, long before the fulfilment of the text—"dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The most shocking mutilations and displacements have been commonly practised—graves bought in perpetuity have been broken in upon, and their tenants mangled and displaced. "Proof after proof has been furnished—always melancholy enough, but often most revolting—that the remains of our departed friends and neighbours have not been allowed to mingle with the elements to which they had been committed—'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'—ere they were rudely distured and sacrilegiously exposed.

Difficulties must necessarily present themselves, in finding a spot for a grave, and it is utterly impossible that a resting place can be found for each and all, without violating the sanctity of the grave—without committing most barbarous outrages; every stroke of the mattock, every action of the spade, must therefore bring to the surface the corruptions of mortality, and cause to mingle with the atmosphere, those deleterious gasses, which, when taken into the lungs, generate disease, and corrupt the blood.

We will now, in conclusion, offer a few remarks on the demoralizing effects of our present system of burial.

Is it not strange, that whilst we boast of our advancement in the arts and sciences, and pride ourselves on our various institutions, founded on philanthropic principles, we should still retain practices, with reference to burial, revolting in every way to our better feelings; customs that would not be tolerated even amidst barbarians, for savage tribes venerate the sacredness of the "tomb's repose." These

brutal customs, which have been before alluded to, it is needless to say, cannot fail to have a most injurious tendency to vitiate the public taste, and blunt and deaden those finer feelings, the offspring of refinement, and result of a well-regulated mind.

Who is there, I would ask, that does not more or less participate in those feelings of repugnance at the disturbance of the dead, which induced the poet to ask—

> "Who would lay
> His body in the city burial-place,
> To be thrown up again by some rude sexton?"
>
> *Kirke White.*

Nothing can tolerate a continuance of our present system: the only argument that can be used by any one in its favor, is that of old-established custom, and a dislike to meddle, or interfere, with ancient usages. Now, few can be more wishful strictly to adhere to the injunction, "Fear God; honour the King, and meddle not with those that are given to change," than the author of the present essay; and nothing short of a conscientious conviction, that the evils are great, and a remedy required, would have induced him in any way to have taken part in what may be considered an infringement on established rites; and it is in order that due consideration should be made for those who may suffer from a change in the present system, that the aid of Parliament is rendered so desirable, that "vested interests" may be guarded, and a national blessing gained, without much sacrifice of personal interest. The Clergy would do well to lend a helping hand in bringing about, in the best possible manner, this change, which sooner or later appears inevitable.

As it regards the early usages of the Church, we find them most decidedly opposed to interments within consecrated buildings; God's Holy Temple was kept pure and undefiled, and only used for sacred purposes. When interments in Churches were first permitted, they were strictly confined to persons of exemplary piety, and bright ornaments to the Church, and their past lives were held up as an example and pattern for others; in no case could this distinguished privilege be purchased with money. This concession, however, once made, pride and affluence waged

incessant warfare against this early usage of the Church, to retain unpolluted the Temple of God—until, at length, ambition and gold won those favors and privileges which had formerly been bestowed upon the pious alone; and thus the buildings which had been consecrated for holy purposes, and set apart for holy things, became in course of time, the common charnel house for all who were able to pay the fee demanded.

In a work recently published, we have a copy of "an ordinance of the Archbishop of Toulouse, concerning interment in Churches." The Archbishop says:—"To the instinct of self-preservation, which calls loudly for a reformation of the present system of burial, we may add the command of God, which directs us to be careful of our lives, that we may serve him and prepare for a happy eternity; and the orders of the Church, which have always reprobated as a profanation the general admission of the dead within consecrated walls, and in places held sacred." §

No one, methinks, can advocate, on religious principles, the general admission of the dead beneath our Churches and Chapels, say "the consigning to the house of the Lord the impure bodies of men, worn out with vice and crime." And as it regards the question in any other light, it surely is not rational to heap the remains of mortality beneath our feet, and thus render our places of assembly, in many instances, little better than pest houses.

In less enlightened times, as we have before shewn, the practice of burying the dead in the midst of the living, was not permitted. Amongst the early Christians we mentioned, the custom was to deposit the dead in some cave or sepulchre, removed from the abode of man. A jewish burial-ground was required by law to be not less than 2,000 cubits distant from a Levitical city—say about a mile. The Roman law of the twelve tables, ordered "the place of burning or burial beyond the city:" "the violation of the tomb was with them most severely punished, either with fine, loss of a hand, banishment, or death." ‡

One object of a Cemetery is, or ought to be, the improvement of the moral sentiments, and refinement of taste in

§ Cemetery Interment, by Mr. Geo. Collison, solicitor, p. 74.
‡ Adam's Roman Antiquities, p. 424.

all classes. I am not now addressing myself to those who hold with Voltaire, "that death is an eternal sleep;" but to such as have "a livelier hope of things to come."

What mortal lesson may be learnt; what pure and holy feelings can be aroused in the breast? what but dread and disgust, I would ask, must invariably be produced, on visiting our crowded burial-places, filled with rank weeds, littered rubbish, and dilapidated tomb-stones, tumbled together in every variety of form? Here the widow cannot silently ornament the grave of her departed husband—the being she loved so dearly, and whose loss can never be replaced on earth; or the affectionate and tender-hearted child, plant a flower on the tomb of a departed parent, showing that those feelings of veneration and respect still remain, which can seldom be erased from a sensitive mind.

"Why," says Washington Irving, "should we seek to clothe death with unnecessary terrors, and spread horror around the tomb of those we loved? The grave should be surrounded by every thing that might inspire kindness and veneration for the dead, or that might win the living to virtue. It is the place, not of disgust and dismay, but of sorrow and meditation,"

Who is there that has visited Père la chaise, or the other continental cemeteries, but must feel grieved that England, who has raised so high the standard of civilization and high moral feeling, should in this particular lag behind? A modern writer in alluding to Père la chaise, says—"With what fervour of religious love do we not behold the simple girl kneeling with uplift eye and hand on the green sod that covers all that endeared her to existence, till, overwhelmed with burning, choking regrets—as idle as they are uncontrolable—she sinks prostrate on the cold earth that now shrouds that bosom which once nestled her young hopes and fears! There have I seen the pale, the haggard youth,—to all appearances a student,—seated mournfully by the side of a tomb, absorbed in deep thought, heedless of the idlers who passed by him, looking at him perhaps with contempt!—heedless of the swift flight of time, which shrouded him imperceptibly in darkness, until he was warned by the guardian of the dead that it was time to depart—and to depart *alone!* No inscription recorded the

"one loved name;" he would not expose it to the unfeeling gaze of the heartless tourist: all he would willingly have traced upon her tomb, would have been "Here lies *my own!*"

The heart is no where more likely to be so feelingly moved, or the memory more powerfully aroused, than during a visit to a parent's or sister's tomb, or the grave of a beloved child, A well-regulated Cemetery affords every facility and inducement for visiting the last resting-place of our companions and friends; the shrubs, flowers, and variegated walks, invite rather than repel the visit of the "mourner in heart." The trees and vegetation around, purify the air; for plants live upon gasses poisonous to man, and give out, in return, oxygen gas, the supporter of life. Thus, while the eye is captivated with nature's charms, the mind is fully assured that miasma does not pervade, neither will it there exercise its baneful influence.

Soon we hope to see the inhabitants of every town provided with a suitable Cemetery, where death may be undisturbedly contemplated, and those mingled feelings of tender sorrow and pleasing recollections indulged in, which cannot fail ever to be produced, when visiting the grave of a departed friend, who we hope and trust one day to meet again, in another and a better world.

J. THOMPSON, PRINTER, MARKET STREET, TAMWORTH.